

of the Anglo-Maori wars (*The New Zealand Journal of History*, October 1967) it is therefore to be expected that in the end the humanitarians would endorse a policy of force. This was the harsh logic of annexation: that the government would defend the European settlements against Maori interests.

Ian Wards has written a provocative work which was intended to prove the thesis that New Zealand was no 'exception to the normal nineteenth century British pattern of territorial acquisition'. If his thesis cannot be sustained, much of the argument and material will be of value to students of this period. There may be a few inaccuracies of name (Robert for Richard Cruise) or place (Matavia for Matauwhi), but there are excellent maps and much information, previously unpublished. It is a study which will be constantly read.

JUDITH BINNEY

*University of Auckland*

*The Colonial and Imperial Conferences 1887-1911. A Study in Imperial Organization.* By John E. Kendle. Longmans (for the Royal Commonwealth Society), London, 1967. 264 pp. U.K. price: 36s.

THE AUTHOR of this new volume in the Royal Commonwealth Society Imperial Studies series is a young Canadian scholar who has worked in England, Australia and New Zealand. It is very much a book for specialists — and specialists will find it very rewarding. Dr Kendle takes a somewhat unfashionable subject and shows that it is far from 'worked out'. He has been exceedingly thorough and has unearthed much new ore.

The debate about imperial organization, the preparation (or lack of preparation) for the colonial and imperial conferences and the conferences themselves are examined in detail. Dr Kendle has discovered much new information about the Pollock committee (in which W. P. Reeves played an important part) and about the Round Table movement. He gives the fullest account so far of their activities. On pp. 146 and 171 he goes a little too far in revising 'accepted opinion'. Neither W. K. Hancock nor the present reviewer appear to have supposed that Lionel Curtis had much, or any, direct contact with J. G. Ward before he proposed his 'imperial parliament' at the 1911 Conference. But this is a minor matter.

In addition to bringing previously-known schemes of imperial reform into clearer focus, Dr Kendle discusses several which have not, I believe, been previously noticed, such as Watson Griffin's and William Courthope's ideas. All of them, he shows, broke on the rock of responsible government: to whom would the members of any new imperial council or parliament be responsible?

Sometimes there was a more covert opposition to reform than colonial or British nationalism. He shows most of the Colonial Office staff strongly resisting all efforts, in the years 1904-07, to create an imperial secretariat and an imperial council. They saw these proposals as threats to their own imperial function. When it was decided, in 1907, to establish a secretariat within the Colonial Office, the intention of the Conference was frustrated by the officials' apathy, conservatism or hostility.

Colonial politicians and agents-general often resented what they took to be the 'superior' attitude of British politicians and officials. Dr Kendle

shows that their suspicions were fully justified. Salisbury thought that 'those Colonists sadly want taking down a peg'. Lord Hugh Cecil wrote of 'transoceanic mediocrities' — 'windy-minded underbred spouters' who formed 'the common type of Colonial politician'. Of course there was some truth in the view that colonial politicians were often vulgar windbags, and that few colonists were knowledgeable about international questions. Earl Grey, Governor-General of Canada, thought in 1908 that only three Canadians had any grasp of the details of Canada's external relations: one who drank, one who was inarticulate and one who was 'a really first class official'. But the 'windy-minded spouters' the British authorities had met included Reeves and Alfred Deakin, men whose reading, intelligence and thoughtfulness were outstanding by any standards. British arrogance was one of the greatest foes of British empire.

KEITH SINCLAIR

*University of Auckland*

*The History of the Royal Commonwealth Society.* By Trevor Reese. Oxford University Press, 1968. 292 pp. U.K. price: 45s.

IN THE LATE nineteenth and early twentieth centuries a number of societies and clubs were formed in Great Britain either to promote imperial union or to further knowledge about the empire. One of the first and most active of these bodies was the Royal Commonwealth Society founded in 1868 (as the Royal Colonial Institute) in response to Gladstone's alleged separatist inclinations. The Society's rooms and especially its magnificent library have long harboured scholars from all over the world and many of them have often regretted that no account existed of such an important private institution. This gap has now been admirably filled by Dr Trevor Reese who has written a lucid readable book which happily lacks the parochial turgidity common to institutional history.

Dr Reese has been concerned to set the Society and its activities in the proper context of empire-commonwealth development. In this he has succeeded extremely well and the account of the Society's problems and doings is always tightly interwoven with the wider canvas. Today the Society is essentially a social and educational body but in its early years much of its energies was devoted to propaganda. The Society took an active and at times fruitful interest in the annexation of Fiji, French and British fishing rights in Newfoundland waters, the crisis over New Guinea, the first colonial conferences and, of course, imperial federation. It was during the pre-1914 period that the difficulty became obvious of remaining a private body which had 'Royal' on its letter-head and to which many political figures belonged, while conducting or promoting public discussion of sensitive political problems. Members of the Society's executive who were also prominent in the civil service or the Liberal government either resigned or ceased to attend over the issue of political discussion of colonial affairs. Since the first war the Society has confined its activities to the promotion of migration and trade and to brief comments on sensitive issues of the day such as closer union in East Africa and independence for India. More recently it has provided facilities for those wishing to debate whether in fact 'the Commonwealth is a farce'.